

SECTION 14

USDA DONATED FOODS

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PROGRAM OVERVIEW

Introduction

By law, the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) acquires agricultural commodities through price support programs, surplus removal, and direct purchase programs from national markets to provide nutritious, quality foods to eligible schools/agencies. The schools, in turn, prepare meals for the purpose of improving the nutritional well being of children receiving the meals. Approximately, 20% of food consumed in schools throughout the United States is donated by the USDA.

A state agency enters into an agreement with USDA to administer the Food Distribution Program to approved sponsors. In Arizona, the agency responsible for administering the Food Distribution Program for congregate meals is the Arizona Department of Education (ADE), Health and Nutrition Services Unit, Food Distribution Program.

Participants in the National School Lunch Program indicate on the Food Service Agreement their choice for participation in the Food Distribution Program.

Legislative Authority

The USDA offers food to the states under four legislative acts:

1. Section 6 of the National School Lunch Act specifically for schools participating in the National School Lunch Program,
2. Section 32 of Public Law 320, August 1935, the Agricultural Surplus Removal Program,
3. Section 416 and 6(e) of the Agricultural Act of 1949, the Price Support and Re-donation Program, and
4. Section 709, which allow the purchase of dairy products at market price for School Lunch Programs.

The USDA pays for the primary processing and packaging of commodities and for transporting them to receiving destinations chosen by the State Distributing Agency (DA), which is ADE.

Commodity Programs

National School Lunch Program (NSLP) - Commodity assistance to school districts operating nonprofit school lunch programs, nonprofit public and private residential childcare agencies and nonprofit private schools.

Summer Food Service Program (SFSP) - Commodity assistance for nonprofit organizations operating food service programs for children under the SFSP.

FOOD DISTRIBUTION SYSTEM

Commodity Categories

The USDA provides an annual dollar value entitlement of commodities to be made available to each of the programs. USDA purchases commodities from the national market or as price support items to fulfill the dollar entitlement for each program. These items are called Group A. States order certain standard staple items for the programs at levels not to exceed the dollar entitlement level authorized. These items are called Group B. USDA provides items, which are in large surplus, that are not subject to an entitlement. These items are called Bonus Items. Commodities are classified based on the method USDA uses to purchase the commodities. Classification of commodities plays an important role in how the foods are ordered, allocated, coded for computer purposes, inventoried and tracked. The following describes the commodity groups:

Group A - This is the largest group of items, which are issued to the National School Lunch and Summer Food Service Programs. Items are available only intermittently and the majority of items are made available during the school year. (Examples: Ground Beef, Canned Peaches, Frozen Turkey, and Frozen Chicken.) Commodity items are allocated to each state by the USDA. Sponsors are notified of expected Group A shipments by the Group "A" calendar (Exhibit A). This calendar serves as a tool for planning menus and commercial purchases.

Group B - These items are usually available year round and are normally staple items used in food service. (Examples: Pasta, Flour, and Peanut Butter.) A perpetual inventory of Group B is kept at the warehouse. Inventory level is based on need projections submitted to the state by the sponsor yearly on the Planned Usage Request Survey Form (Exhibit B).

Bonus Items - Group A or B foods may be available as Bonus. The "Commodity Notice of Arrival" will indicate the word Bonus. The values of Bonus items are not charged against the sponsor's entitlement.

Processed Items - The State enters into processing agreements with vendors to convert raw commodity into processed items, which are more acceptable and usable for schools. When there are enough commitments from schools, the Department of Education Food Distribution staff diverts shipments of the raw product from USDA vendors directly to the processor. The finished product is shipped to the warehouse for distribution to schools or directly to a school. Processed items are handled the same way as any other Group A/B commodity e.g., allocations to specific schools and a 45 day storage period. Processed items reflect the processors packaging and labels, not the USDA commodity packaging and labeling.

Food Distribution on the Internet

Arizona Department of Education (ADE) has developed a web program allowing all schools to receive their commodity allocations, refuse commodities, as well as place all commodity orders

directly with the commercial distributor on-line through the Internet. All schools are required to maintain and track their commodities through the Internet. Classes are offered throughout the school year to train new Food Service Directors. Access to a district's commodities on-line are given to participants during the training.

Commodity Allocation

The Commodity Notice of Arrival (Exhibit C) is used to notify schools of inventory that is available for ordering from the warehouse. These items are allocated to sponsors on a fair share basis.

After receiving the posted allocation on the Internet, schools that want to refuse some or all of the products must refuse their commodities on-line by the due date identified in the top center of the allocation. The values of the refused products are returned to the sponsor's entitlement if refused by refusal date. The sponsor is allowed 60 days of "free storage" for items accepted. Items must be ordered before the end of the storage time, or close date. If not refused by that date the product is reallocated to another sponsor and the entitlement value is lost. Allocations are considered accepted when there is no reply.

Planned Usage Request Survey

Sponsors are required to submit the Planned Usage Survey annually. The survey is posted to the web site January of each year. It covers the period of July 1 – June 30. This form must be submitted directly to ADE on the Internet. The survey is used by the Food Distribution staff to order Group B commodities from USDA.

It contains the sponsor's name, address and a six-digit County-Type-District (CTD) number. The CTD number is important when placing orders with the warehouse and communicating with Food Distribution staff. The entitlement assigned to the sponsor for the entire year is located in the top right hand corner.

The bottom half of the survey lists the names of the products available, the type of container, i.e., case or bag, the four digit USDA commodity code, i.e., B060, the months for which the sponsor is requesting cases to be shipped and the USDA value of the food. Group B requests must stay within the dollar entitlement assigned.

Food Distribution will tabulate all requests to determine the feasibility of shipping a commodity into the commercial distributor's warehouse or directly to a processor. Sponsors will be notified whether a shipment can or cannot be arranged. Surveys must be submitted to Food Distribution by the due date established to assure the product is available for the requested month.

Confirmations of requests are returned which indicate the commodities and amounts available to order. Sponsors should immediately verify the confirmation against the original request to ensure input errors have not occurred. Contact Food Distribution when discrepancies are discovered.

Do not place orders in advance, order only in the month requested. In order to prevent excess storage fees, commodities are ordered monthly from USDA based on requests. All requests for the month must be ordered or transferred to private storage by the end of the month. When cases are left at the end of the month sponsors are billed excess storage charges.

Entitlement

A sponsor's entitlement level is computed by multiplying their ADP of the prior year by the current commodity dollar assistance. This figure is split between Group A and B. The entitlement dollar indicates the total value of commodities a sponsor will be offered during the program year. When a commodity is indicated as "bonus" on the Allocation, it is not deducted from entitlement. The value of the commodities are identified on the Notice of Arrival Allocation and Planned Usage Reports. Monitoring the dollar value of the commodities received in the food service operation is an important management tool. Sponsors must track the value of commodities received for the Annual Financial Report and provide auditors the level of federal assistance received. Additionally, the USDA price list is used to establish the value when a commodity loss occurs.

COMMERCIAL DISTRIBUTION SYSTEM

Overview

USDA contracts with the Department of Education (ADE) to warehouse and distribute commodities to eligible sponsors within the State of Arizona. The ADE has a contract with a commercial distributor for the handling, storage, and distribution of the commodities to all sponsors throughout the State. The ADE also has agreements with sponsors that include the administrative and storage requirements for participation in the Food Distribution Program. The Food Distribution Program staff is responsible for ordering the commodities from USDA based on availability and projections on the Planned Usage Request. Sponsors order their commodities directly from the commercial warehouse. Sponsors are billed by the warehouse for a storage, delivery and State administration charge. Distribution charges are on a per case shipped basis, negotiated by ADE and the warehouse annually.

Method of Delivery/Pickup

Sponsors may choose one of the following options to receive commodities:

- 1) Delivery to Food Preparation Site - Delivery to kitchen sites where meals are prepared for congregate meals. Driver is to place the commodities in the proper storage area: dry, freezer and cooler. The driver will not put the commodities on the shelves or make room in the storage areas for them. Also, schools are not allowed on the distributors truck to unload commodities. Minimum delivery amount is 10 or 20 cases depending on your Average Daily Participation (ADP).
- 2) Delivery to School District or Central Warehouse - Delivery to a central warehouse receiving area. This could also be a central kitchen, such as the main kitchen for a school district where commodities are further distributed to schools throughout the district. Deliveries to central

warehouses will be on exchangeable pallets. If the sponsor does not have a platform, the product must be unloaded at grade level by means of a forklift truck. There is a minimum delivery amount of one hundred (100) cases.

- 3) Pick up at Distributor's Warehouse - Commodities are picked up from the warehouse and transported by sponsors in their own or contracted refrigerated vehicles. Issues across the warehouse platform will be at the platform outloading door on exchangeable pallets. There is a minimum pick up amount of one hundred (100) cases.

A 10 case minimum drop fee is required for sponsors with an ADP of 250 or less. A 20 case minimum drop fee is required for sponsors with an ADP of 251 or more. Sponsors choose the method of delivery prior to each school year (July 1 - June 30). The delivery method may not be changed during the year.

The warehouse provides sponsors with delivery schedules and allowable pick-up days. Distributors delivery hours are from 6:00 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. Schools will not be required to accept delivery after 2:30 p.m. unless mutually agreed upon by the school and the warehouse. The warehouse will contact sponsors if for any reason the scheduled delivery cannot be made. Deliveries will not be made on State and school district holidays, during school closures and during physical inventory reconciliation conducted by ADE and the warehouse. However, the sponsor must notify the warehouse of any known closure in advance, within the mutually agreed upon time frame.

Each delivery receipt is to be signed by the school. Schools must indicate shortages, overages and refused damaged cases on the warehouse receipt and initial. Signing the receipt indicates that everything was received and in good condition. **Schools must call the warehouse to have shortages and damages reshipped.**

Ordering Procedure

Ordering commodities is performed on the Internet. Schools order commodities directly with the commercial distributor by submitting orders on-line (Exhibit D).

Group A and B commodities (bonus and/or entitlement) can only be ordered if an allocation has been posted to the Internet for a district. Group B/Planned Usage Survey commodities are to be ordered according to confirmations once they have been posted to the Internet. Groups A and B and processed items may be ordered at the same time.

Sponsors may place orders for less than the required 10 or 20 cases but the shipping charge will be for the minimum amount. It is more cost effective to call the Food Distribution staff and request a special allocation of surplus inventory that will help meet the minimum delivery charge.

The commercial distributor requires a 72-hour (3 working days) prior notice to the assigned delivery day. Orders may be placed weekly, every other week or monthly. The sponsor determines the frequency of the deliveries.

A sponsor with more than one delivery site must submit an order per site to receive deliveries at each site. If an order is less than the minimum required delivery amount the charge will be for the

minimum delivery quantity. Schools **MUST** keep a copy of the completed order to verify against the delivery.

The commodity warehouse is closed the last week of June for the physical inventory. Also the first three weeks in July to reconcile the physical count with ADE and the commercial distributor. No deliveries will be made until reconciliation is complete.

Receiving Responsibility

1. Shipments from Distributor

Check the delivery and have the driver indicate on the receipt if there are shortages and/or damages. Refuse all cases that are damaged. Contact the warehouse to reorder short and/or damaged commodities. Reordered items will be shipped on the next scheduled delivery day. Invoices will be only for the number of cases shipped on reorders, no minimum delivery fee will be assessed. Reorders may be combined with a future order to help meet the minimum 10 or 20 case shipping charge. The school is responsible for the delivery once the receipt is signed. **The warehouse is not responsible for shortages and/or damages after the driver has left the delivery site.**

2. USDA Direct Shipments

Large schools with warehouse facilities may elect to receive full truckload quantities of commodities direct from USDA. These shipments are coordinated between the schools and Food Distribution. The following requirements apply to sponsors electing to receive direct shipments from USDA:

- All truckers are instructed by USDA to arrange unloading appointments directly with the school, 24 hours in advance.
- Truck shipments are scheduled to arrive either palletized, slip sheeted or the driver may tailgate the product on the school's pallets. The school normally unloads the truck.
- The school inspects the load upon arrival and verifies the accuracy of the count. A Receiving Report (Exhibit E) is completed within five working days after delivery and returned to the Food Distribution Unit. An over, short and/or damaged report (Exhibit F) must be submitted if shipment is not accurate.

Sponsors are charged an administrative fee by the Food Distribution program for cases that are direct shipments.

Payment to Warehouse

The invoice received at time of delivery is a "bill". Submit payment to the warehouse. **Be sure to identify the invoice being paid with an invoice number on the warrant or check stub.** Statements of accounts are sent each month. Payment is due 30 days upon receipt. Shipments will be stopped after 60 days for nonpayment. Reimbursement claims will also be held until the amount due has been received. Shipment of commodities will then resume. A late fee of 1.5% is assessed on all bills 60 or more days in arrears.

Excess Storage

ADE will charge sponsors \$1.00 per case on all cases not refused or ordered out by the close date of the allocation or when ADE has cleared the allocation from the web system.

COMMODITY PROCESSING

USDA regulations allow State Distributing Agencies to enter into agreements with commercial food companies for the processing of commodities into various end products [7 CFR Part 250.30(b)]. When the desired end products are labor intensive or the commodity is difficult to work with, processing is an option. Processing converts labor intensive commodities into labor friendly commodities. It also allows schools the ability to be creative and create variety for their lunch program. One commodity can be converted into many different products.

To provide improved customer service to schools, ADE has performed the procurement function of obtaining processing vendors. ADE has contracted with a variety of vendors to convert raw USDA commodities into finished product. To utilize processed commodities, schools only need the current ADE contract number for audit purposes.

Donated Food Processing Programs

Master Donated Food Agreement Processing Program

The ADE has contracted with over forty vendors by incorporating the USDA Master Donated Food Agreement into State contract requirements with processors which specifies the terms and conditions of the processing program. Processors submit items for approval by ADE that they wish to market in the State. Several processors may offer the same product. Schools chose the processor that best fits their needs.

Processing surveys are posted to the web site in January, which enable sponsors to have their commodities directly shipped to processors from USDA. This arrangement is the most cost effective but cannot be utilized unless a full truck of one item is shipped. ADE compiles the number of requests from schools surveys. Then the raw USDA inventory is combined utilizing all schools to fill a truck. Direct diversions of full trucks to processors will be coordinated by ADE. Direct diversion is the agency's preference, however commodities may be backhauled from the school's warehouse or the commercial warehouse.

Fee Arrangements

The cost of processing donated foods into various end products will be based on one of the following:

Commercially Structured Processing

The processing of donated food is incorporated into the Processor's normal manner of business, including production, pricing, and delivery of the end product. A specific value for the donated food contained in the end product is established based on the November 15 USDA Commodity Sequence Code File. The Processor shall ensure that the full value of donated food contained in each case of end product will be passed to the school. With the approval of Food Distribution, the processor will select one value pass-through system. (Exhibit G)

Fee-For-Service

A fee-for-service is a price representing the processor's cost of ingredients (other than the commodities), labor, packing, overhead, and other costs incurred in the conversion of the commodity into the specified end products. A fee-for-service is used only when the commodity represents a significant portion of the end product. No discount or refund per case is established, consequently, there is no credit for value of the commodity. The net price is based on a per pound unit charge for processing raw product.

Distributing Agency Record Keeping and Reporting

The Food Distribution Unit will be responsible for:

- Verifying the actual amount of commodities contained in end products by computations on the End Product Data Schedule, product specification sheets, and Processor's production records.
- Reporting to USDA the amount of commodity inventories at the processors.
- Coordinating commodity shipments and deliveries to processors to ensure that the quantity of commodities for which a processor is accountable is at the lowest cost-efficient level. No more than a six-month supply, based on the processor's monthly usage, is acceptable unless approved by Food Distribution. This will be accomplished by monitoring the processor's performance reports and allowing adequate lead time for placing orders to USDA.
- Providing processors with updated lists of sponsors.
- Working with processors to notify sponsors of the products available. A list of approved processors and their products is sent to sponsors annually.
- Assure that proper documentation is maintained to support refunds of donated food value to schools.

Sponsor Responsibilities

- Assure that purchasing procedures are in compliance with the appropriate state competitive bidding requirements (generally, public schools and state institutions) or the procurement standards on OMB Circular Number A-102 (generally, private schools).
- To pay for transportation, pickup, and delivery of products within 30 days. Be sure to verify if prices listed in the Processing Catalog are FOB processor's dock.
- If product is bid, the school could pay less than the amount indicated in the Processing Catalog. However, you will not be charged more than what has been approved by ADE.
- Records must be maintained with respect to receipt, disposal, and inventory of processed donated foods.

- Perform appropriate paperwork:
 - Sign and maintain a file of load-out checklist, bills of lading, and delivery tickets for the transfer and return of donated food to a Processor
 - Maintain invoices to ensure that the value of the donated food contained in the finished product was received in exchange for the raw donated food.
 - Submit the appropriate Processor's Refund Application to the processor within 30 days from the end of the month of the date of delivery of end products containing commodities.
- Monitor performance of processors and bring any problems to the attention of the Food Distribution staff.

USE OF USDA COMMODITIES

Food Service Management Companies

Food Service Management Companies (FSMC) may be employed to conduct the food service operations of eligible Child Nutrition Program sponsors. The contract between the sponsor and the FSMC must include, but not limited to:

1. Any commodities received by the sponsor and made available to the FSMC shall be utilized solely for the purpose of providing benefits for the employing agency's food service operation and it is the responsibility of the sponsor to demonstrate that the full value of all commodities is used solely for the benefit of the sponsor.
2. The FSMC is responsible for the security and care of the commodities. Claims for loss, theft or damage are the responsibility of the FSMC.
3. Schools are responsible for ensuring Federal Regulations are met.
4. The FSMC will keep records for a period of five years from the close of the fiscal year.
5. FSMC must attend all training required by ADE.

For more information on FSMC, refer to Section 11 and the manual *Contracting for Food Management Services*.

Use of Commodities in the Class Room

Schools may provide any type of commodity for use in training students in home economics classes and nutrition education classes at all grade levels. No charge is to be made for commodities transferred to classes. It is recommended that a transfer slip, listing the type and amount of commodities, be signed by the receiving teacher. Commodities should be released to teachers on an as needed basis. All handling and storage requirements must be met.

Administering Several Food Programs

Records must be kept to indicate commodities received for each Child Nutrition Program administered. However, if the Summer Food Service Program is operated under seamless waiver all commodities are received and logged as National School Lunch Program commodities. Use of product from one federal program to another must be tracked so replacement can be made.

Catering

Commodities may **not** be used for catering of school (e.g., school clubs or sports banquets, PTAs, etc.) or nonschool functions (e.g., Chamber of Commerce, clubs, political rallies, etc.).

Schools may use commodities for other meal service activity which is operated in the school or under the nonprofit school food service account such as: a la carte sales, school breakfast program and meals and snacks in residential child care institutions (RCCIs).

Schools contracting to provide meals and/or snacks to elderly programs or child care centers for a fee are providing a catering service. Schools in this situation may prepare and provide meals containing commodities to child care centers, but may not claim these children or adults in their average daily participation count or for school lunch reimbursement. Many Headstarts and child care centers are on the Child and Adult Care Food Program in which they receive cash per meal for commodities along with their reimbursement claims. Schools must also be able to show that they have replaced commodities with commercial replacement sufficient to cover these additional meals.

CARE AND STORAGE OF COMMODITIES

Storage Procedures

Any school receiving USDA commodities is responsible for the care of the commodities. This would include but is not limited to:

1. Check each delivery of food for possible shortages and damage before the foods are accepted.
 - Refrigerated and frozen products must be examined to ensure that the temperature of the product is adequate and that they are in good condition.
 - Canned foods must be examined to determine if there are any damaged, disfigured, or discolored cases or cans, which might indicate spoilage or deterioration.

- Foods subject to insect infestation must be thoroughly inspected.
 - Foods found to be out of condition must be segregated from other foods and handled in accordance with loss procedures.
2. A perpetual inventory record must be kept for all foods in stock. (Exhibit H)
 3. Adequate safeguards must be taken to protect commodities from theft, loss, or spoilage.
 - There must be no external openings in the structure of the building where foods are stored which would allow rodent and insect infestation.
 - Extermination must be performed at a minimum of once a month. Extermination may not be an adequate safeguard against infestation; therefore, fumigation should be instituted when extermination is inadequate. A record of extermination/ fumigation must be kept.
 - Secure locks should be placed on freezer/coolers and all doors of buildings where commodities are stored. This will help prevent theft and vandalism.
 4. Freezer/cooler/dry checks. It is required that district personnel be assigned to make freezer/cooler/dry checks every day at a minimum and maintain a log of checks (Exhibit I). The log should contain:
 - the date of the check
 - the time of the check
 - the recorded temperature
 - the signature of the person conducting the check

This practice must be continued during the summer vacation, or any other vacation period. If it is not possible to make these checks on weekends, then they should be made late Friday afternoons and early Monday mornings.

5. The following temperatures should be maintained:

<u>Items</u>	<u>Examples</u>	<u>Recommended Temperatures</u>
Frozen foods	Beef	0° F or below
Cooler foods	Cheese	35° to 40° F
Grain Products	Flour	50° F or below
Dry Storage	Canned Goods	70° F or below

Refer to the *Food Storage Guide* for the recommended storage temperatures of all products.

6. Commodities must be stored off the floor on pallets or shelving and away from the wall for proper ventilation.

Transfers

Only order quantities that can be properly stored and utilized without waste.

- Except in unusual circumstances, an inventory of no more than a six-month supply of commodities on hand should be maintained.
- Notify the ADE if there is more than a six-month supply so that a transfer can be made to an eligible school in the vicinity. Transfer forms are supplied for this purpose (Exhibit J). The form is to be signed by both donor and recipient. The transferring agency guarantees the product for three months from the transfer date.

Loss, Spoiled, or Damaged Commodities

Sponsors are financially responsible for commodity loss through spoilage or theft due to negligence or failure to provide adequate storage or protection of commodities in the school's possession. A loss of commodities due to spoilage, infestation, fire, or theft occurs and the value is \$2,500 or more, should be reported immediately by phone to Food Distribution. If the value of the commodity loss is less than \$2,500, complete the loss form and keep on file for audit trail of inventory. The State Agency will issue appropriate instructions for disposition of commodities that are damaged or unfit for human consumption. USDA Donated Food Loss forms will be issued for the purpose of providing a thorough explanation of the loss (Exhibit K). Losses occurring as a result of theft or break-in should be investigated by local authorities and a copy of the their report enclosed with the loss report. A loss report from fire should include a statement from the fire chief or other official that investigated the fire. Do not dispose of a commodity without prior authorization from Food Distribution. Commodity losses may be compensated by payment for the value of the commodities or by replacing the product, this determination is made by Food Distribution.

Report any out-of-condition or damaged product received to Food Distribution. Provide the following information:

- Name of sponsor
- Name of commodity
- Contract number and/or plant number
- Date product was received and date of pack
- Condition of the commodity (including identification or description of foreign matter), and how the commodity was discovered to be out-of-condition.
- Quantity on hand that is assumed to be unusable or questionable.

When Group A or B entitlement commodities are received out-of-condition or damaged, these commodities will be replaced with like commodities, if possible. No replacement will occur if the loss or damage was due to sponsor mishandling or the sponsor has already exceeded their entitlement.

Food Alerts

All sponsors will be notified when there is an urgent concern about the safety, wholesomeness, or condition of commodities. Notification will be made expeditiously either verbally or in writing stating "This is a Food Alert - a potential hazard has been discovered". An immediate hold must be placed on all products covered by this alert until advice on proper disposition is received. After

instructions are received from USDA, notification will be provided either releasing the foods for program use or providing instructions for the disposition of unsafe products.

Records and Reports

Sponsors must maintain and complete the following records of commodity inventory and usage:

1. Sponsors annually should complete and retain on site the Storage Facility Self-Evaluation Form (Exhibit L). This is also a tool to ensure that safe storage and handling methods are practiced. It also ensures that USDA guidelines are met with regards to commodity storage.
2. Sponsors who contract with Food Service Management Company's must complete an annual Inventory Report based on actual physical counts of commodities. The report is due July of each year. The report should indicate only full cases/bags of donated food in inventory and/or at private storage facilities (Exhibit M).
3. A contract with a private storage facility should be on file (Exhibit N). The contract should list the facility's responsibility for damage, theft and/or fire of commodities.
4. A perpetual inventory should be maintained for the most efficient use of commodities. A periodic physical inventory must be taken to determine the accurate quantities of commodities on hand.
5. Sponsor Detailed Shipping report, (Exhibit O) will be sent by Food Distribution every month. This is your verification of shipment received. Discrepancies in the report should be reported (Exhibit O).
6. Year-End Value of Commodities Delivered report should be kept on file; this is the value of commodities delivered and must be retained for auditing purposes.

COMMUNICATION

Food Preference Surveys

The Food Distribution Program is required by USDA to collect commodity acceptability information from at least 10 percent of all sponsors every other year. Schools are surveyed on the types and forms of commodities that are most useful to program participants, commodity specification recommendations and requests for options regarding package sizes and forms of commodities. This data is collected by Food Distribution Program and submitted to the USDA, Food and Consumer Services (FCS), by April 30 every other year.

Food Distribution Advisory Council

A National Food Distribution Advisory Council comprised of representatives from all nutrition programs at national, state and local levels meets twice a year with the FCS staff. Recommendations are printed and submitted to Congress annually.

Arizona has an Advisory Council that is made up of a diverse representation of school districts. They meet on a monthly basis. Council members serve two -year terms. The purpose of the Council is to provide Arizona Food Distribution Program assistance in special projects, input of commodity choices and guidance.

Commodity Complaints

If a school receives a product that they feel is not acceptable due to the quality or condition of the product, complete the Food Distribution Commodity Complaint Form (Exhibit P). It is necessary that all pertinent information about the product, such as contract number, plant number, date of pack, date of receipt, be provided to allow for appropriate investigation by USDA. This information can be obtained by contacting Food Distribution Program.

DISASTER FEEDING

Release of Commodities

Should a natural or man-made disaster occur, sponsors will be contacted by local disaster authorities for release of commodities. Sponsors are required to comply with the following procedures in regard to utilization of USDA commodities:

1. Upon declaration of a natural or man-made disaster, local disaster authorities, i.e., Red Cross, Civil Defense, and Salvation Army, will contact schools participating in the National School Lunch Program to request food.
2. Upon being contacted by disaster authorities, school personnel should contact ADE Food Distribution for authority to release USDA commodities, giving the following information to the extent possible:
 - Description of disaster situation;
 - Number of people requiring meals and group feeding period;
 - Quantity and types of food needed for group feeding; and
 - Number and location of sites for group feeding.
3. When authorization has been given by Food Distribution, records should be kept as to the types of food and quantity released or prepared for the disaster relief agency. Complete Form FNS-292 (Exhibit Q) and submit to Food Distribution within 10 working days after the end of the disaster.
4. Food Distribution will replace commodities to the extent possible with foods of equal value or in-kind.